

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2342
INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY SUVA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0741

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PP PGOV PINT
SUBJ: PROSPECTS FOR NEW PNG COALITION

REF: PORT MORESBY 0738

1. THIS ASSESSMENT SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION REFTTEL.
2. BOTH PANGU AND PPP ASSUME THAT THEY WILL REMAIN TOGETHER IN A COALITION AFTER ELECTIONS. GENERAL OPINION HOLDS THAT PPP WILL DO BETTER THAN PANGU, BUT BY HOW MUCH IS UNCERTAIN. IF PPP WINS IN EXCESS OF 10 SEATS OVER PANGU, THERE WILL BE PRESSURE FOR CHAN TO BECOME PRIME MINISTER IN COALITION. SOMARE'S ABILITY TO ATTRACT INDEPENDENTS TO HIS STANDARD, IN OUR VIEW, STILL GIVES HIM A BETTER PROSPECT OF BEING COALITION LEADER THAN CHAN, EVEN IF PANGU WINS FEWER SEATS. CAMPAIGN HAS NOT BROUGHT CHAN AND SOMARE INTO CONFLICT, AND WE EXPECT THAT PRIME MINISTERSHIP WILL BE RESOLVED BEHIND
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CLOSED DOORS. WE DOUBT THAT PANGU/PPP WILL ACHIEVE MAJORITY AND THEY WILL HAVE TO AUGMENT COALITION WITH INDEPENDENTS OR PERHAPS EVEN WITH PART OF UNITED PARTY. THE UP (WE BELIEVE UNREALISTICALLY) STILL HOPES TO GAIN AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY, BUT CONTINUES TO ACT UPON ASSUMPTION THAT IT WILL NEED A COALITION PARTNER TO FORM A GOVERNMENT. THE UP HAS TWICE APPROACHED PAPUA BESENA, BUT PB IS KEEPING ITS

OPTIONS OPEN. BOTH WOULD HAVE TO PERFORM EXCEEDINGLY WELL TO MAKE SUCH A COALITION A POSSIBILITY. ITS PROSPECT IS DIMMED BY FACTIONALIZATION WITHIN THE UP AND FACT THAT SIR TEI ABAL AND ANTON PARAO, THE TWO UP FACTION LEADERS, ARE BOTH FIGHTING CLOSE CONTESTS FOR THEIR OWN SEATS. PROSPECTS FOR A GRAND COALITION COMPOSED OF PANGU, PPP AND PART OF UNITED PARTY SHOULD NOT BE DISCOUNTED. ALTHOUGH UP ATTACKS ON HONESTY OF COALITION HAVE SOMEWHAT SOURED RELATIONS BETWEEN SOMARE AND UP LEADER SIR TEI ABAL, WE BELIEVE UP WOULD ENTER SUCH COALITION IF OFFERED FIVE MINISTERS, PROVIDED SOMARE RATHER THAN CHAN WAS PRIME MINISTER. GRAND COALITION RECOMMENDS ITSELF IN THAT IT WOULD BRING SUBSTANTIAL HIGHLAND REPRESENTATION INTO NEW MINISTRY. HOWEVER, PPP IS ATTEMPTING TO UNSEAT SIR TEI ABAL IN WABAG AND UP, WITH HELP OF MATANGUAN OSCAR TAMMUR, IS SEEKING TO OUST CHAN IN CHAN'S DISTRICT, THEREBY OPENING OLD WOUNDS BETWEEN UP AND PPP GOING BACK TO 1972. THEORETICALLY, A COALITION OF DISPARATE GROUPS OF POLITICAL OUTS AND MALCONTENTS UNDER LEADERSHIP OF SIR JOHN GUISE IS POSSIBLE. THIS WOULD CONSIST OF GUISE, PAPUA BESENA, COUNTRY PARTY, NEW GUINEA NATIONAL PARTY LEADERSHIP AND SOME TIRED RADICALS SUCH AS JOHN KAPUTIN, LEO HANNETT AND SOME ELEMENTS OF UNITED PARTY. WHILE NOT IMPOSSIBLE, SUCH A FORMATION WOULD BE HIGHLY IMPROBABLE AND QUITE UNSTABLE.

3. MUCH OF OUR DISCUSSION IS BASED ON ASSUMPTION THAT CERTAIN KEY PNG POLITICAL FIGURES WILL BE RETURNED AND BE IN POSITION TO ASSIST IN BUILDING THE NEXT COALITION. THIS MAY BE AN INCORRECT ASSUMPTION IN THAT ALL MAJOR
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POLITICAL FIGURES EXCEPT MICHAEL SOMARE ARE FACING STRONG CONTESTS. WE BELIEVE SOMARE WILL BE RETURNED AND ON BALANCE THAT PPP LEADER JULIUS CHAN WILL ALSO. UP LEADERS TEI ABAL AND PARAO BOTH FACE CONTESTS TOO CLOSE TO CALL. SIR MAORI KIKI, A PRIME MOVER IN CONSTRUCTION OF 1972 COALITION, IS SQUARED OFF AGAINST JOSEPHINE ABAIJAH, LEADER OF PAPUA BESENA, IN NATIONAL CAPITAL DISTRICT. ABAIJAH IS FAVORED BY MOST BUT OUR VIEW IS THAT KIKI MAY STILL SQUEAK IN. SIR JOHN GUISE IS FACE WITH A TOUGH BATTLE WHICH FEW ARE WILLING TO CALL, BUT AT THIS POINT WE BELIEVE HE WILL WIN NARROWLY. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT LAST TWO WEEKS OF CAMPAIGN WILL BE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE SINCE CAMPAIGNS IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA TRADITIONALLY PEAK VERY CLOSE TO ELECTION DATE. WE COULD SEE MAJOR CHANGES, THEREFORE, DURING NEXT 10 DAYS.
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